Provincial Assessment Policy Kindergarten to Grade 12

Academic Responsibility, Honesty, and Promotion/Retention

Manitoba

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Preamble

This document outlines Manitoba Education's assessment policy and principles in the areas of academic responsibility, honesty, and promotion/retention. Beginning February 1, 2011, practices in Manitoba schools related to these areas will align with those described in this document. School divisions in Manitoba will formalize divisional policies that conform to this document by September 2011.

The policies and principles included in this document build on those found in the Manitoba documents *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind: Assessment for Learning, Assessment as Learning, Assessment of Learning* and *Communicating Student Learning: Guidelines for Schools* (both of which are available at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/index.html>), as well as *Success for All Learners: A Handbook on Differentiating Instruction*. Content and ideas have also been drawn from the Ontario document *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools* (available at <www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/growSuccess.pdf>).*

Rationale

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. A strong assessment policy will help create the conditions needed to accomplish Manitoba's educational mission:

> To ensure that all Manitoba's children and youth have access to an array of educational opportunities such that every learner experiences success through relevant, engaging and high quality education that prepares them for lifelong learning and citizenship in a democratic, socially just and sustainable society.
> (Available at <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/edu/mandate.html>.)

In Manitoba, we share a sense of what it takes for children and youth to become responsible adults, develop integrity, and contribute to building strong and democratic communities.

Manitoba students need to become adults who take responsibility for lifelong learning and citizenship. Our assessment policies must cultivate that sense of responsibility early on by providing appropriate and challenging expectations and ensuring that students rise to these challenges.

These policies must also be firmly rooted in our values, especially our shared sense of diligence, honesty, and fairness. Students should learn to do their own work, follow

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* This document has been adapted from the "Evaluation" chapter (pages 38 to 46) of *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools, First Edition, Covering Grades 1 to 12, 2010* by the Ontario Ministry of Education. © Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2010. Adapted and reproduced with permission.

timelines, and give credit when they borrow the ideas of others, and should be held accountable for these behaviours.

In order for students to complete their education with a profound sense of accomplishment, Manitobans expect that students will make consistent progress based on evidence of achievement. Educational leaders are responsible for ensuring that students are placed in learning environments that best support ongoing progress.

Assessment *of* Learning

The focus of this policy document is summative assessment, or assessment *of* learning, which refers to the process of judging the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria and assigning a value to represent that quality. It accurately summarizes and communicates to students, parents,* other teachers, employers, and institutions of further education what students know and can do with respect to the curriculum. Assessment *of* learning provides evidence of student achievement at strategic times throughout the grade/course, often at the end of a period of learning.

Evidence of student achievement is collected over time from three different sources—observations, conversations, and student products. Using multiple sources of evidence increases the reliability and validity of the assessment of student achievement.

Assessment tasks used for summative purposes may be in the form of rich performance tasks, demonstrations, projects, and/or essays as well as tests or exams and/or assignments. To ensure equity for all students, assessment tasks being used to provide evidence of achievement are to be completed, whenever possible, under the supervision of a teacher. Care should be taken to distinguish between homework assignments designed to be graded from homework assigned in order to consolidate knowledge or skills, or as preparation for future class work.

The assessment *of* student learning is the responsibility of the teacher. Teachers will take various considerations into account before making a decision about the grade to be entered on a report card. The teacher will consider all evidence collected through assessment tasks that the student has completed or submitted, the number of tests/exams or assignments that were not completed or submitted, and the evidence of achievement that is available in a particular grade or course.

In addition, the teacher will consider that some evidence carries greater weight than other evidence; for example, some performance tasks are richer and reveal more about students' skills and knowledge than others. Teachers will weigh all evidence of student

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* In this document, the term *parents* refers to both parents and guardians and is used with the recognition that, in some cases, only one parent may be involved in a child's education.

achievement in light of these considerations and will use their professional judgment to determine the student's report card grade. The report card grade represents a student's overall achievement, as demonstrated to that point in time.

Determining a grade will involve teachers' professional judgment. This includes the interpretation of evidence and should reflect the student's most consistent level of achievement, with special consideration given to more recent evidence. Not all assessment task scores need to be included.

Principals have a critical role to play in ensuring that there is a common understanding among all staff about the process for determining the final grade. They are consequently expected to exercise their leadership and work collaboratively with teachers to ensure common and equitable grading practices that follow departmental and divisional policies.

Academic Responsibility

Principles

Assessment practice and policy at the provincial and local levels must support students' responsibility for their learning. In addition to developing academic knowledge, it is important to support students in the development of lifelong learning skills and values, and that educational practice and policy reflect this. It must be made clear to students that they are responsible for providing evidence of their learning within established timelines, and that there are consequences for not completing work and for submitting work late.

Policy

Teachers also have important responsibilities in supporting the learning of all students. Their responsibilities include the following:

1. **Establish and clearly communicate expectations regarding assignments.** Assignment requirements and assessment criteria should be discussed with students. Teachers communicate to students the intended learning outcomes, the nature of the products and performances, and the criteria for judging the evidence of learning. Teachers should be prepared to clarify the expectations if necessary, by providing exemplars, and to provide timely and specific feedback to students.
2. **Set and communicate reasonable timelines for assignments and support students in meeting these timelines.** The timelines teachers set should provide adequate time for students to complete the work, while being mindful of other demands and of student strengths and challenges.

Teachers should use their professional judgment to establish reasonable but firm expectations regarding timelines. They should also use their professional judgment to support and motivate students who do not take responsibility for their work through the use of a variety of strategies to ensure students make regular progress on assignments. Regular communication about student progress among teachers, students, and parents will support timely completion of assignments. Other strategies may include the following:

- Solicit and consider student input and collaborate with other staff to coordinate the timing of major assignments.
- Share assignment timelines and reminders through many means, including classroom web pages, email, and course outlines.
- Assist students to manage time effectively—monitoring student progress at each stage of a complex assignment can ensure they stay on track.
- Anticipate which students may require additional supports to complete assigned tasks, and monitor those students more closely.
- Choose, when appropriate, to extend time for completing assignments, especially for students who communicate with the teacher in advance of the due date.
- Contact parents to discuss strategies for keeping students on track when they are falling behind or not taking responsibility for their work.

3. **Establish, communicate, and apply consequences for late and missing work.** Students must understand that there will be consequences for not completing assignments that provide evidence of learning or for submitting those assignments late. If, after establishing and clearly communicating expectations regarding assignments, setting and communicating timelines for assignments, and supporting student learning using the strategies provided above, student work is still late or missing, teachers may apply the following strategies based on their professional judgment:

   - Confer with the student and, where appropriate, with the student's parents about the reasons for not completing the assignment, and consider the legitimacy of reasons.
   - Develop an agreement with the student to complete the work.
   - Require the student to complete missing work during school time or at lunch or after school within a supervised setting in accordance with school division policy.
   - Provide appropriate support to students in the form of counselling or peer tutoring to address issues and barriers that may be preventing the student from completing assigned work.
   - Provide additional supports for students who are learning English or French as an additional language.

- Provide alternative assessment tasks that accommodate diverse learning needs.
- Deduct marks for late or missing assignments.

In applying consequences to late or missing work, teachers will consider the nature of the assignment, the individual circumstances of the student (especially struggling learners), and the potential impact of the consequence on subsequent learning and motivation. Whatever the consequence, students are ultimately responsible for the timely completion of their assignments and for knowing that there are consequences for failure to adhere to those parameters.

Academic Honesty

Principles

Students must understand that the tests/exams they complete and the assignments they submit as evidence of learning must be their own work and that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Policy

Teachers and principals have the following responsibilities:

- **Communicate and reinforce expectations of academic honesty with students.** Aspects of academic honesty include not *cheating* (e.g., copying others' work, using cheat notes), *lying* (e.g., misrepresenting contributions to group work, lying about circumstances to obtain extensions), and *plagiarizing* (submitting or representing someone else's work as one's own).
- **Respond appropriately to academic dishonesty.** School and divisional policies will specify a range of consequences for academic dishonesty and invoke these sanctions as appropriate.

Teachers should apply strategies to deal with academic dishonesty, such as the following:

- Contact parents.
- Document the incident in the student's file.
- Report this behaviour on the report card.
- Enforce loss of privileges for the student at the school.
- Enforce other disciplinary measures such as detention.

- Have the student redo the work honestly.
- Deduct marks for academic dishonesty.

Teachers need to consider the nature of the assignment, the age and maturity of the student, the individual circumstances of the student, and the potential impact of the consequence on subsequent learning and motivation. Whatever the consequence, students should complete the work in an honest way.

Academic Promotion/Retention

Principles

Divisions may not adopt a policy that mandates student promotion regardless of achievement. Students should be placed in the grade that is appropriate for their curricular, cognitive, social, and emotional learning needs. Decisions around promotion or retention of students may have far-reaching implications for student success in school.

Policy

1. **In Kindergarten to Grade 8, promotion decisions rest with the principal, who consults with teachers, parents, and other specialists as appropriate.** The decision is based on the evidence of the student's progress and growth, and considers the grade level placement that would support and extend the student's learning.

   Whether the decision is to retain or to promote a struggling student, the school must address that student's learning needs. For example, simply having a student retained in a grade to repeat all the work done the previous year will not necessarily address the student's learning needs and result in success. In a similar manner, simply promoting a struggling student, without adequate supports, will not lead to success.

2. **In Grades 9 to 12, the final decision on whether or not to grant credits rests with the principal, who consults with teachers, parents, and other specialists as appropriate.** Granting credits and diplomas must be based on clear evidence of achievement of the learning outcomes set out in provincial curricula or modified curricula (as set out in an individual education plan), as appropriate.

If a student does not submit the necessary evidence of learning to be granted a credit in a course, then the student may be assigned a failing grade or be assigned a grade of "IN" (incomplete). The "IN" indicator is not reported to the Department unless otherwise directed.* Information would only be reported to the Department once a student has been granted a percentage mark. If an "IN" is assigned, a plan must be put in place at the school level to assist the student in submitting the outstanding evidence of learning in order to receive the credit within a reasonable, agreed-upon timeframe.

Local Policy Development

Schools are expected to act in accordance with the principles laid out in this document as of February 1, 2011, with the support of local school divisions. School divisions shall revise or develop assessment policies that align with provincial policy. The divisional policy shall reflect the policy statements related to academic responsibility, honesty, and promotion/retention contained herein and should be formalized in time for the 2011/12 school year.

School division policies will do the following:

- Describe how schools will inform students and their parents about the importance of submitting assignments when they are due and about the consequences for students who submit assignments late or who fail to submit assignments.
- Provide clear procedures for determining a mark for a student who has failed to submit one or more assignments on time or at all.
- Describe how schools will communicate and reinforce expectations for academic honesty with students and their parents.
- Outline a range of consequences for academic dishonesty.
- Outline the process for making decisions about the promotion of students, under the direction of the principal, that involves parents, teachers, and other specialists as appropriate, and that ensures that, regardless of the decision, supports are put in place for struggling students.
- Include a protocol that specifies a process for resolving conflicts related to a student's progress, achievement, and retention/promotion.

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* The current requirement to report "Incomplete" (IN) and "Complete" (CO) to the Department applies only to Grades 11 and 12 Physical Education/Health Education where "IN" and "CO" act in place of percentage marks and represent a final assessment of the student's achievement.

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